

HEALTH MATTERS

CINCINNATI HEALTH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

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“We Know Health Matters”,
CHD’s show on Citicable,
Time Warner Ch. 23.

Playback Times

Mon	9, 11 a.m.
Wed	5 p.m.
Thur	2 p.m.
Fri	9 a.m.
Sun	3 p.m.

Also available online on Vimeo

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If you have anything you would like to
share in the newsletter please send
information to Marla Fuller at
marla.fuller@cincinnati-oh.gov

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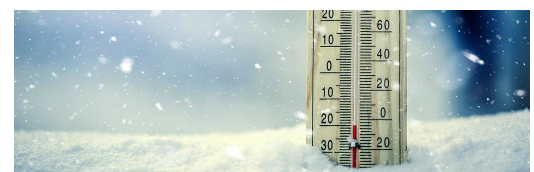


Stay Safe During and After a Winter Storm

During extremely cold weather or winter storms, staying warm and safe can be a challenge. Winter storms can bring cold temperatures, power failures, loss of communication services, and icy roads. There’s a higher risk for car accidents, hypothermia, frostbite, carbon monoxide poisoning, and heart attacks from over-exertion. To keep yourself and your loved ones safe, you should know how to prepare your home and your car before a winter storm hits.

Protect yourself and your loved ones during a winter storm. Take extra steps to make sure you heat your home safely, and follow the tips below. If you plan to use a wood stove, fireplace, or space heater, be extremely careful. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions and remember these safety tips:

- Turning on the stove for heat is not safe; have at least one of the following heat sources in case the power goes out:
 - Extra blankets, sleeping bags, and warm winter coats
 - Fireplace that is up to code with plenty of dry firewood or a gas log fire place
 - Portable space heaters or kerosene heaters. Check with your local fire department to make sure that kerosene heaters are legal in your area.
- Use electric space heaters with automatic shut-off switches and non-glowing elements. Make sure to keep them away from any flammable materials, like curtains or blankets.
- Use fireplaces, wood stoves, or other combustion heaters only if they are properly vented to the outside and do not leak gas from the flue or exhaust into the indoor air space.
- Have your heating system serviced by a qualified technician every year.
- Do not burn paper in a fireplace.
- Make sure you have proper ventilation if you must use a kerosene heater.
- Use only the type of fuel your heater is designed to use—don’t substitute.
- Keep heat sources, like space heaters, at least 3 feet away from drapes, furniture, or bedding. Never cover your space heater.
- Never place a space heater on top of furniture or near water.
- Never leave children unattended near a space heater.
- Make sure that the cord of an electric space heater is not a tripping hazard, but do not run the cord under carpets or rugs.
- Avoid using extension cords to plug in your space heater.
- If your space heater has a damaged electrical cord or produces sparks, do not use it.





I'd like to take the opportunity to formally introduce you to our Division Manager/Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Robert L. Hall, Jr. Mr. Hall has worked with us for the past few months and has been busy getting acclimated with the department. If your paths haven't crossed yet, they will soon.

Mr. Hall's work with the City of Cincinnati began prior to him being an actual employee of the City. In fact, he was an employee of Hall & Associates who were partnered with Ernst and Young in a combined business venture. Hall & Associates conducted audits throughout the City's process around 1991 through 1993.

Mr. Hall obtained his certification as certified public accountant (CPA) in 1994. He has a dual degree of accounting and finance from the University of Cincinnati. He started his employment with the City of Cincinnati in Spring of 1996 as a Deputy Treasurer in City's Treasurer office. Prior to the working with the Cincinnati Organized and Dedicated Employees (CODE) forming he was briefly an officer with Middle Management Association (MMA) around 1998 and 1999. He left the City's service and pursued a career with Jefferson Wells, a consulting firm, for about a year during the Fall of 2000 through 2001. He returned to City of Cincinnati where he worked in the Department of Public Services. Mr. Hall served as the accountant and then Senior accountant in every aspect of the department. During his employment with the City, Mr. Hall attended Mount St. Joseph University in 2016 to obtain a master's degree in business administration which he earned in 2018. He is a member of the Government Finance Officer Association (GFOA), as well as a member in the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) where he serves as an officer with the local chapter of AGA. He is married with two teenage daughters.



COVID 19 is putting a burden on hospitals and healthcare workers

The City of Cincinnati is experiencing exponential growth in the number of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths are rising. It's no surprise that hospital staff and physical facilities are becoming taxed beyond capacity. It is more important than ever to follow guidance from local, state, and federal officials on how to stop and slow the spread of COVID-19.

As such, the Cincinnati Health Department urges all City residents to implement the following steps to prevent the spread of the virus, protect the lives of you and your loved ones, and preserve our acute and other healthcare services and capacity.

- Stay at home to the greatest extent possible. Only leave home for work, school or essential needs, such as food or medical care.
- Observe the state-wide curfew, issued November 19, from 10 p.m. – 5 a.m. daily.
- Limit exposure in your home. Only immediate household members should be allowed in. Re-think your holiday plans to eliminate gatherings.
- Continue to follow all health orders and advisories, such as wear a mask, maintain at least six feet of distance from others; wash hands frequently and stay home when you are ill.
- All gatherings should be limited to 10 or fewer. This includes both inside and outside of your home.
- If you have symptoms of COVID-19, including but not limited to new onset of fever, cough, shortness of breath, congestion or runny nose, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, body aches, or unusual fatigue, isolate and call your primary care provider for next steps.
- If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, you must isolate for 10 days from the date of symptom onset, or from the date of test collection (until you are not experiencing symptoms). In the home, sick or infected individuals should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific "sick room" or area, and use a separate bathroom, if available. Don't wait to hear from your health department – begin these steps immediately.
- Residents who have been identified as a contact to an individual diagnosed with COVID-19 should quarantine for one full incubation period (14 days) from the date of last contact. Individuals in quarantine should stay home, separate from others, monitor their health, and follow all instructions from the Cincinnati Health Department or your local health department.

As cold weather moves in and the holidays approach, people spend more time indoors. Please take the necessary steps to slow the spread of COVID-19. Wear a mask, stay at least 6 feet apart, avoid crowds, and wash your hands often. The more steps you take, the more you are protected against COVID-19.

A Message from the Board of Health



Edward Herzig, MD
Board Chair

Please join me in congratulating Commissioner Melba R. Moore who was named Humanitarian of the Year by Mayor John Cranley for her leadership during this global pandemic.

During the most uncertain time in our lives, Commissioner Moore has exhibited all of the qualities that make her the Humanitarian of the Year. Although she has always been recognized as a leader in the health community, she has used her position, education, business acumen and personal contacts — at great personal and professional risk — to lead our community through the COVID-19 crisis.

Under her leadership CHD has accomplished a great deal including but not limited to:

- uncovering creative solutions designed to protect and serve all citizens more effectively
- repurposed facilities and secured equipment and supplies to respond to the pandemic aligning the public with the need to embrace critical public health interventions such as vaccine acceptance, masking, and physical distancing requirements.
- broadened telehealth services, ensuring access to care while reducing the risk of COVID-19 exposure for both patients and healthcare providers.

Congratulations Commissioner Moore and thank you for all that you do! Job well done!

December 1- 7 - National Influenza Vaccination Week



National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) is an annual observance in December to remind everyone 6 months and older that there's still time to get vaccinated against flu to be protected during the upcoming season. Vaccination is particularly important for people who are most vulnerable to developing serious flu complications, including people with certain chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease. In fact, last flu season 9 out of 10 adults hospitalized for flu had at least one reported underlying medical condition.

This year that message is more important than ever, especially given the possibility that both flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will spread this winter. This could place a tremendous burden on the health care system and result in many more illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths than during a regular flu season

— especially among people managing chronic conditions because many of them also are at higher risk from COVID-19. The good news is that there is a flu vaccine that is tried and true; proven to reduce the risk of flu illness, hospitalizations and death.

There's so much that's beyond control this winter season. But we do have the power to get a flu shot to protect ourselves and our families from flu and its complications. Flu vaccination during the COVID-19 pandemic should be of added importance because it can help reduce the overall burden of respiratory disease and save medical resources for the care of COVID-19 patients.

1. Take everyday preventive actions that are always recommended to reduce the spread of flu.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- If you are sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.

2. Cover coughs and sneezes.

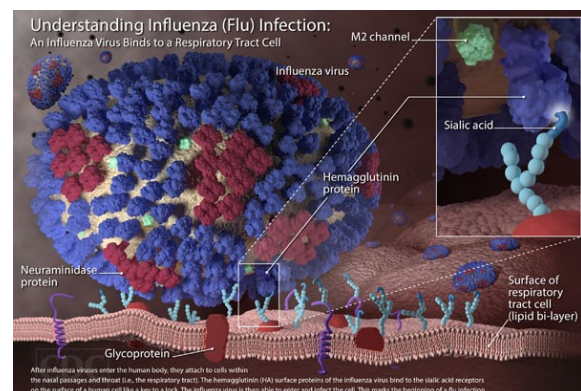
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

3. Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

4. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.

5. Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with viruses that cause flu.

Together, we can use NIVW as a nationwide call to action to encourage everyone ages 6 months and older to get their annual flu shot, especially those with chronic conditions. The more people vaccinated against flu, the more people protected from flu.





During the Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19) pandemic, keeping hands clean is especially important to help prevent the virus from spreading.

Regular handwashing is one of the best ways to remove germs, avoid getting sick, and prevent the spread of germs to others. Whether you are at home, at work, traveling, or out in the community, find out how handwashing with soap and water can protect you and your family.

How Germs Spread

Washing hands can keep you healthy and prevent the spread of respiratory and diarrheal infections from one person to the next. Germs can spread from other people or surfaces when you:

- Touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Prepare or eat food and drinks with unwashed hands
- Touch a contaminated surface or objects
- Blow your nose, cough, or sneeze into hands and then touch other people's hands or common objects

You can help yourself and your loved ones stay healthy by washing your hands often, especially during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:

- After using the toilet or changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- Before, during, and after preparing food or eating
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage

Baby wipes may make your hands look clean, but they're not designed to remove germs from your hands. CDC recommends washing hands with soap and water when possible.

Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community—from your home and workplace to childcare facilities and hospitals. Follow these five steps every time:

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.



Use Hand Sanitizer When You Can't Use Soap and Water

You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label. Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. However, sanitizers do not get rid of all types of germs. Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy. Hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals from hands like pesticides and heavy metals.

How to use hand sanitizer

- Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers for about 20 seconds until your hands are dry.
- Use Hand Sanitizer When You Can't Use Soap and Water

Caution! Swallowing alcohol-based hand sanitizers can cause alcohol poisoning if more than a couple of mouthfuls are swallowed. Keep it out of reach of young children and supervise their use.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, you should also clean hands:

- After you have been in a public place and touched an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people, such as door handles, tables, gas pumps, shopping carts, or electronic cashier registers/screens, etc.
- Before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth because that's how germs enter our bodies.

How to Safely Celebrate Christmas and New Year During COVID 19

Being away from family and friends during the holidays can be hard, but visiting family and friends can put everyone in danger during the COVID 19 pandemic. So when you talk with your friends and family about plans, it's okay if you decide to stay home and remain apart from others. In fact, health officials and experts across the nation have issued a strong warning: Visiting family and friends can put everyone in danger this winter holiday season.

CHD urges all residents to consider and follow this guidance to prevent the spread of the virus, protect themselves and those that they love.

How do I know what decision is right for me for the upcoming holidays?

Weigh the risks of COVID-19 for yourself and your loved ones

- Talk about it ahead of time
- Review or ask about the guest list, it should be a short list
- Ask what safety measures will be in place
- Check or ask about the space to ensure safe distancing
- If you decide to get together, make a plan, share with guests, and stick to it
- Think about specific things you can do to reduce the risk and make the gathering safer.

What does a safer Christmas and New Year actually look like?

The safest way to celebrate is not to celebrate in person

- Avoid gathering at all and find alternate ways to celebrate.
- Meet virtually via a video call or phone call.
- Consider making some new traditions.
- Organize a virtual call with extended family to discuss everyone's feasts and what they are thankful for.
- Share recipes instead of dinner.
- Dig out those old photos and videos of Christmas/ New Year past, use video chat to share your favorites with relatives, and ask them to do the same. Have the most tech-savvy family member create a shareable video combining all the contributions.
- Have your own parade. Drive by homes of neighbors or family members to wish them a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Take a walk with your family to help work off your holiday meal. Be sure to dress appropriately for the weather.

If you do gather, do it differently

- Have a small dinner that includes only those who already reside in your home.
- Host your gathering outdoors, when possible.
- Make sure the space is well ventilated by opening windows and doors, if possible
- Arrange tables and chairs to allow for social distancing.
- People from the same household can be in groups together and do not need to be 6 feet apart – just 6 feet away from other groups or families.
- Limit people going in and out of the areas where food is being prepared or handled, if possible.
- Have one household approach the food serving area at a time to prevent congregating.
- Use single-use options or identify one person to serve any sharable items.
- Avoid serving dinner as a buffet.

Before you gather

- If you or someone you live with is sick or has any symptoms that could be COVID, stay at home or cancel the gathering;
- Make sure you have hand sanitizer or make it available while gathering;
Set your own boundaries and follow through;
Avoid judgement about the decisions of others;

While you are gathering

Practice the 3 W's (Wear, Wait, Wash) during the event:

- **Wear a face covering** when not eating or drinking,
- **Wait six feet apart** from others, and
- **Wash your hands** regularly.

Reminders:

When guests need to remove their mask to eat or drink, maintain 6 feet distance and put the mask back on after done eating or drinking.

Regularly disinfect frequently touches surfaces like doorknobs and light switches.

Do you need health insurance coverage? Now is the time to enroll in a 2021 health plan, as open enrollment for health coverage through the Affordable Care Act marketplace is officially underway.

Open enrollment is the time period each year when you're allowed to start, stop or change your health insurance plan. Normally, you sign up around the end of one calendar year for coverage that lasts the next full year.

That means it's time to check in with your current health insurance status because it's never too early to get prepared, know the dates, and plan! Whether you're buying for an individual or a family, CHD has everything you need to know about open enrollment 2021.

Open Enrollment runs from Sunday, November 1 through Tuesday, December 15, 2020. Coverage begins January 1, 2021. Make sure you don't miss the deadline by adding these important dates to your calendar:

Ohio Medicaid: November 1, 2020 - November 30, 2020 — Change you Managed Care Plan (MCP) without question. Your new plan would start January 1, 2021.

Marketplace: November 1, 2020 - December 15, 2020 — First day you can enroll, re-enroll, or change a 2021 insurance plan through the Health Insurance Marketplace. Coverage would start January 1, 2021.

FOR MARKETPLACE ONLY:

If you don't enroll in a plan by December 15, you can't get 2021 coverage unless you qualify for a Special Enrollment Period (SEP).

Need coverage outside of open enrollment?

You can still get health coverage if you qualify for a Special Enrollment Period due to a qualifying life event — like getting married, losing other coverage, or having a baby. We can help you find out if you qualify.

The Cincinnati Health Department can help you find the plan that's right for you. Consumers should contact the Outreach and Enrollment Team at **513.564.2273 (CARE)** to schedule an appointment at one of CHD's community health centers for enrollment assistance.

The following people should not attend in-person holiday gatherings

- People with or exposed to COVID-19
- Do not host or participate in any in-person gatherings if you or anyone in your household
- Has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and has not met the criteria for when it is safe to be around others
- Has symptoms of COVID-19
- Is waiting for COVID-19 viral test results
- May have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- Is at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19
- Do not host or attend gatherings with anyone who has COVID-19 or has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- People at increased risk for severe illness

If you are an older adult or person with certain medical conditions who is at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, or live or work with someone at increased risk of severe illness, you should avoid in-person gatherings with people who do not live in your household.

Do you follow CHD on social media?

If not, be sure to like and follow:



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